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HD **Catherine McKenna plans to disburse Ontario climate change funds directly**

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A Nov. 9 news story on climate change incorrectly said Ontario is Canada's biggest polluter.

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Minister of Environment says Ottawa will work with municipalities, corporations that are committed to action to meet Paris agreement

Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change is vowing to go around provincial politicians who oppose her government's climate agenda, saying she will work with municipalities and corporations instead.

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"The challenge is with conservative politicians who don't seem to acknowledge the costs of climate change, and they don't seem to understand the economic opportunity," Catherine McKenna said in a recent interview with The Globe and Mail.

"If they're not committed to climate action, we will work with people who are," she said.

On Thursday, the minister began doing just that in Ontario, announcing that the \$420-million remaining in the province's Low Carbon Economy Fund, which was established to help provinces reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a bid to meet Canada's Paris agreement commitments, will be distributed to cities, hospitals, universities, schools and businesses to help with efficiency programs and other emission-reduction efforts.

Even before the announcement, her plan prompted an acerbic response from the province, where Rod Phillips, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, said in a statement it was Prime Minister Justin Trudeau "who promised a new era of relationships with provinces.

In reality, since August, they have refused to communicate with us about a plan or targets and would rather impose an unaffordable tax on the families."

Ms. McKenna said she is modelling her efforts at home on Canada's work "with U.S. states, U.S. cities, U.S. businesses" on climate change after the election of Donald Trump, who pulled Washington out of the Paris agreement.

Similarly, if "the [Premier Doug] Ford administration is not committed to climate action ... we're going to work with the cities, the schools, the hospitals, the businesses and Ontarians who want to be more energy-efficient," Ms. McKenna said.

The federal Environment Minister spoke to The Globe during a trip to China last week, where she signed an agreement to work more closely with Beijing on climate change. But reaching an understanding with Ontario – Canada's wealthiest province and biggest polluter – remains elusive.

Ms. McKenna's criticism prompted a stern response from the province, where Mr. Phillips said Thursday: "It would appear that they've decided they don't want to deal with the Ontario government any more ... that's their decision."

Mr. Phillips earlier questioned the fault Ms. McKenna found with conservative politicians.

"It's an NDP government in Alberta, it's a Liberal government in PEI," Mr. Phillips said. In total, "six provinces oppose the federal plan. Instead of working around us, they should be working with us toward reducing emissions. We are working with municipalities, stakeholders, industry and the people of Ontario to implement our plan in the best way possible."

Ms. McKenna, however, argued that Ottawa wants to create incentives for lower-carbon solutions.

"There's going to be a price on pollution. If it is free to pollute, there will be more pollution," she said, speaking in Beijing after meetings with senior Chinese officials to discuss environmental issues.

Last week, Ms. McKenna signed a memorandum of understanding with her Chinese counterpart, Li Ganjie, Minister of Ecology and Environment, that will allow for greater government and corporate cooperation between the two countries.

Ottawa's alignment with Beijing on the environment comes at a time when Chinese emissions are growing quickly, while those in the United States continue to fall.

But Ms. McKenna voiced faith in Beijing's leadership, repeating some of the country's mantras – a "Green Belt and Road" and the idea of "ecological civilization" promoted by President Xi Jinping.

China is the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. But it "is working really hard," Ms. McKenna said. And, she added, "Chinese leadership at the table is extraordinarily important. If we are going to actually move forward on the Paris agreement, we need them to be encouraging, pushing, cajoling other countries to make sure that they're engaging in a positive way, especially now that the U.S. has stepped back."

She dismissed fears that a trade war with the United States would prompt Beijing to renew stimulus spending and, with it, the environmental toll of building new highways, rail lines and bridges.

"We've certainly made the point strongly that China, as it looks at its own infrastructure, and as it supports infrastructure projects internationally through the [Belt and Road initiative], they really need to make sure that they're done in a sustainable way, that steel and concrete can be a large source of emissions and they need to be thoughtful about that."

The Trudeau government has been slow in pursuing some of its ambitions with China, including a free-trade deal and an extradition treaty, in part because of differing values and priorities between the two countries.

But, Ms. McKenna said, the climate file has offered a chance for Canadian corporations to offer clean-technology solutions to China, and for Ottawa to regularly speak with Beijing.

"We're working across the board in a whole variety of areas with China," she said. "But certainly one that has been very positive, including with the Prime Minister's visit, was on climate action. And that helps with your overall relationship."

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